

# Newsletter August 2019

*The Unitarian Church of Underwood  
is a welcoming community of  
diverse people where our  
celebration of life and common  
search for meaning bind us  
together.*

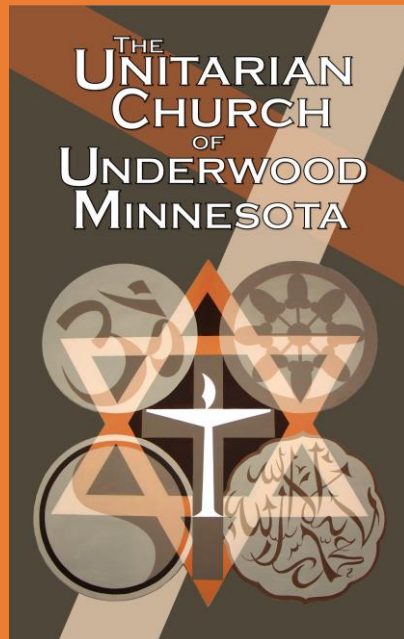
## Unitarian Church of Underwood

PO Box 58, 206 North Main Street  
Underwood

Phone: 218/826-6553

Website: [www.ucofu.org](http://www.ucofu.org)

[www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org](https://www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org)



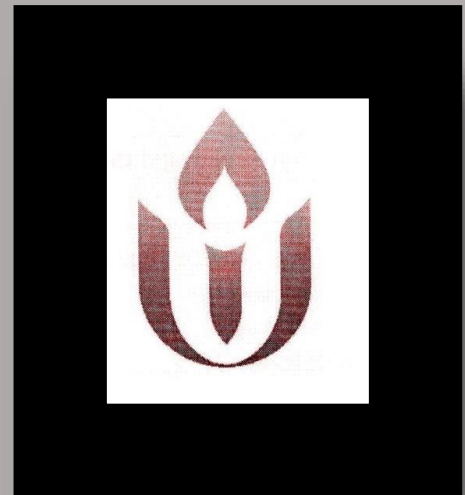
### Sunday Services 10 a.m.

August 4 – Barb Honer, “The Good, the Bad and the Humanity”

August 11 – Willard Yellowbird, “Understanding the Oneness of the Spirit in the Native American Tradition”

August 18 - - “Building Community” with Tere Mann & others leading the service at Phelps Mill

August 25 – Dr. Hilda Koster, “Planetary Solidarity: Women, Theology, and Climate Justice”



“Dusty Work” painting by Mickie Edmonds

August 2019						
◀ July						September ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
<b>4</b> Barb Honer, "The Good, the Bad and the Humanity" Mindfulness Sitting 9:15 am Children's RE 10:00-11:15 am	<b>5</b>  AA 7 pm	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Records Committee 5 PM	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> Willard Yellowbird, "Understanding the Oneness of the Spirit in the Native American Tradition Mindfulness Sitting 9:15 am Children's RE 10:00-11:15 am	<b>12</b>  AA 7 pm	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Speakers Committee 3 PM @ #300	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> "Building Community" with Tere Mann & Bert Whitcombe leading the service at <b>Phelps Mill</b> Mindfulness Sitting 9:15 am Children's RE 10:00-11:15 am	<b>19</b>  AA 7 pm	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Board Meeting 5:30 PM	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> Dr. Hilda Koster, "Planetary Solidarity: Women, Theology, and Climate Justice" Mindfulness Sitting 9:15 am Children's RE 10:00-11:15 am	<b>26</b>  AA 7 pm	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Underwood Harvest Festival 

## Monthly Greeting from Board President, Kris Warhol



Would you agree that we are a collective group of unique individuals? We are teachers, learners, story tellers, magicians. We are creative. We are adaptable. We are resilient and flexible. We are a giant jigsaw that requires assembly of often oddly shaped interlocking and tessellating pieces. When complete, it produces a picture, sometimes shown as incomplete; sometimes symbolizing that there is room to add new knowledge and representing the concepts of searching for solutions and responses.

Take a moment to see and feel how you fit into our giant jigsaw.

Our children have been learning how they fit into this great dance of life, looking at our planet, the vastness of space. They are learning about the laws of gravity which affects all life on earth.

We see natural law at work all the time in the changing seasons, growth and decay, the order of the sun, moon, planets, universe and stars.

We call this spiritual law. It is precise, definite, certain, human and animal. It is scientific and is as much a part of life as we are ourselves.

Spiritual law makes all our pieces fit. We belong, interlocking, creating a beautiful picture which as it should be. Ever changing and growing. *Kris Warhol*

## *Speakers Coming in August*

**August 4 - Barb Honer, "The Good, the Bad and the Humanity."** Barb will describe her how her work in Pelican Rapids brought her to Belize for a service trip through Faith Lutheran Church of Pelican Rapids. Using photos, journal and stories, she will share what she learned about helping people, white privilege and compassion for others both near and far.



**August 11 - Willard Yellowbird, "Understanding the Oneness of the Spirit in the Native American Tradition."** Willard is of the Arikara/Hidatsa tribe. His traditional name is Bear Shield. He is an enrolled member of the Three Affiliates Tribes on the Fort Berthold Reservation. He has been living in Fargo for 35 years where he is a Cultural Planner with the city of Fargo. He works with all the social services, state and federal agencies that deal with Native American issues. With his talk, Willard will perform a smudging ceremony for spiritual blessing and purification.

**August 18- Annual Phelps Mill service & potluck/picnic @ roadside shelter: “Building Community” with Tere Mann & others** (Alison Francis, Amy Beckman, Joan Vorderbruggen, Katy Olson, Betsy Wells, Sandy Barnhouse). How we see ourselves and our world is important in how we move and work in our everyday lives and how we can be a part of the Great Turning. Bring a dish to share, your own plates, beverage & lawn chair (picnic table seating). Wear comfortable shoes for the moving exercises. Any questions - Betsy Wells [betsyanddougwells@gmail.com](mailto:betsyanddougwells@gmail.com)



*Communities need to be nurtured as well as the individuals in them. It is important to stop occasionally to acknowledge the role and power of the group and its collective process in our lives.*

*We come together in communities for many reasons—to celebrate life passages, to accomplish a collective task, to dance, sing, be wild or quiet, tell our stories, laugh, tough and be touched.*

*With this service we will celebrate the circle of strength and support that builds from the individual’s participation in community and the community’s return of that strength and support to the individual.*

*We are facing many challenges in our world today.*

*We see and feel the effects of climate change, we are in despair at the disregard for democracy, the disregard of fellow humans, and destruction of the planet and the degradation of the life-giving elements of earth, fire, water, air and that which connects all. We have compassion, the suffering with, for the planet, other beings and yet how do we put that compassion into action?*

*With Joanna Macy’s work as a guide, we will follow the “Work that Reconnects” and explore the “Spiral of the Work.” Beginning with Gratitude to quiet the mind and bring us back to the source. We then move to “honoring our pain” to awaken our compassion and begin “seeing with new eyes” that place of experiencing our interconnectedness and end with “Going Forth.”*

*We can practice the Work that Reconnects. We can move from a place of gratitude and with gratitude we have the strength to acknowledge and honor our pain. To see the separateness re-awakens our compassion and moves us in to experiencing the interconnectedness of all that is. We move with others, we see with new eyes, we are not alone, and we go forth with the strength and support of community, knowing that we give and receive strength from the community.*

*For this service, we will do some fun experiential exercises which demonstrate the Work, the Reconnects and the role that our UCU Community does have and can have in our individual lives. Tere Mann*



**August 25 – Dr. Hilda Koster, “Planetary Solidarity: Women, Theology, and Climate Justice.”**

Dr. Hilda Koster is a Concordia College professor of Religion, Environmental and Sustainability studies. She is the co-editor of two books: *Planetary Solidarity: Global Women’s Voices on Christian Doctrine* and *Climate Justice and The Gift of Theology: The Contribution of Kathryn Tanner*. Both books focus on women and climate change.



**Children’s Religious Education**

With the busy summer, attendance of the children has been down. Those coming take advantage of the learnings and fun. Near the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, we tried to draw a flag from memory and then checked our work with a real flag. Then we talked about the meaning, care, etc. After that, we did some chalk art in front of the church, had a snack and then played Jenga with Violet winning against Ron and Wally winning against Violet.

Ron’s fun with science continues at every opportunity. So does hide-a-way fun!







### **U Group Schedule (Meetings Monthly)**

- Battle Lake U Group, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday @ 3:00 p.m. @ Linda & Steve Bergs. Facilitators: Bob Worner/Kris Warhol.
- Alexandria U Group social gathering – August 14 @ Alexandria United Methodist Church for NW Legal Services benefit with pizza and music.

**The Alexandria, Perham and Fergus Falls U Groups will resume meeting monthly again in September.**

Facilitators needed for 2019-20. To learn more or join a group, contact Lead Co-Facilitators: Kris Warhol @ [mwarhol7up@gmail.com](mailto:mwarhol7up@gmail.com) or 218/205-1644 or Shannon Smith @ [shannonsmith20@gmail.com](mailto:shannonsmith20@gmail.com) Or 320/630-6229

### **Religious Education**

**Mindfulness Sitting continues each Sunday from 9:15 -10:15 a.m. @ #300 of Sverdrup Suites**

**Adult Religious Education Classes will resume in September**

**Children's Religious Education will continue each Sunday from 10:05 – 11:15 at #300 of Sverdrup Suites**

**Website:**

**[www.ucofu.org](http://www.ucofu.org)**

**Sunday Talks available via  
PodCasts @ [soundcloud.com/user-927528278](https://soundcloud.com/user-927528278)**

**"Like" UCU on Facebook: see  
[www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org](https://www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org)**

### **Newsletter Submissions due prior to Issuance the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month**

**Please submit your ideas, articles and photos to:**  
[maryanderson8380@msn.com](mailto:maryanderson8380@msn.com).

Editing: Stephanie Sanderson

Emailing/mailling: Ellen Eastby and Mary Anderson

Website: Ellen Eastby

Facebook: Melody Shores

Photos courtesy of Norm Kolstad & credited others.

**Monthly Newsletters come out on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month via email. They are also posted at [www.ucofu.org](http://www.ucofu.org).**

**If you have ideas on how to shorten, change, improve the newsletter, please contact Mary Anderson.**

**Contact Mary Anderson @218/346-6638 or [maryanderson8380@msn.com](mailto:maryanderson8380@msn.com) for Sunday announcements. Contact Kris Warhol @ 218/ or [mwarhol7up@gmail.com](mailto:mwarhol7up@gmail.com) for local media notifications. Betsy Wells is handling Sunday service announcements in the media.**

## Notes from July Programs

**July 7 – Bob Worner, “Declaration of Dependence.”** Podcast: <https://soundcloud.com/user-927528278/declaration-of-dependence-bob-worner-july-7-2019>

**July 14 Rev. Roger Parks, "God who Fills the Universe."**

Podcast at <https://soundcloud.com/user-927528278/engaging-in-conscious-love-of-all-creations>

Attendance: 36

**July 21 – Dr. Marta Adelsman, “How to Speak Peace in a Violent World.”** Podcast @ <https://soundcloud.com/user-927528278/speaking-peace-in-a-violent-world-marta-adelsman-july-21-2019>

Attendance: 51

A one-hour workshop also titled, “How to Speak Peace in a Violent World” led by Dr. Adelsman followed the service. The workshop addressed two scenarios: 1) When we feel dissatisfied with a person’s actions/words or with a situation, and 2) when someone lets us know they are dissatisfied with our actions or words. Dr. Marta Adelsman taught the four steps of Non-Violent Communication to decrease conflict and increase harmony in relationships. There was time for questions and for interaction among participants.

**July 28 – Chris Hyslop, “Certain Seeds Are Being Sown.”** Podcast link @ <https://soundcloud.com/user-927528278/certain-seeds-are-being-sown-chris-hyslop-july-28-2019>

Attendance: 69

**To follow up on information from the June 30<sup>th</sup> speaker, Brady McClafin,** Community and Member Relations at Churches United for the Homeless in Moorhead, note that **Ron Graham** prepared a report for the United Way of Otter Tail County (dated January 5, 2015) on HOMELESSNESS IN OTTER TAIL COUNTY MINNESOTA. Copies of this report are available from Ron @ [universeron@hotmail.com](mailto:universeron@hotmail.com).

*Living Out Our UU Principles*  
**Save the Dates!!**

**Shan Schools Gala  
Sunday, August 4, 12  
– 4 P.M.**

Come enjoy a garden party and Shan cuisine at Lindentree, the home of Katy Olson and Ron Roller. Visit with Bernice

Johnson, the visionary woman who started the Shan School Project; enjoy a tour of Ron's fantastic garden; shop the Thai Import Boutique and feast on Shan cuisine.



Come and enjoy; Lassi, Cocktails, Fruit Punch, Tea Leaf Salad, Spring Rolls, Green Curry, Shan Rice, Tofu Noodles, Shan Style Noodles with Chicken, and to top it all off, Mango Sweet Rice!

For \$50 a child can attend a Thai school for a year. We need to reach our fundraising goal of \$2,000 at this gala to support education for 40 Shan children. Bring your generosity and your checkbooks.

Act quickly to reserve one of the last spaces. If you cannot attend, your donation is welcome! RSVP to [katyjolson@gmail.com](mailto:katyjolson@gmail.com) or call Katy at 218-770-6681

**Garden Tour  
@ Bev & Roger Parks  
Sunday, August 11 Noon – 3 p.m.**

If you have been one of the appreciators of the bouquets Bev Parker brings for Sunday services, you'll be sure to enjoy a tour of her gardens at the Parks' home east of Clitherall on Hwy. 210. Contact the Parks for details: [rparks@arvig.net](mailto:rparks@arvig.net).



**Underwood Harvest Festival  
Saturday, August 31**

To increase church visibility and as a part of the community, the Unitarian Church of Underwood has been participating in the Underwood Harvest Festival since 2014. This year UCU with the help of Cedar Walters and the RE kids, will be spotlighting the benefits of recycling to help save our environment. Watch for Cedar and the kids with the logo-laden Otter Tail County trailer in the parade starting at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday.

Here's pictures from UCU participation in previous parades:





2014



**2018**



### **Habitat for Humanity**



Stan Carignan, Fergus Falls Habitat Humanity's Executive Director participated in his 4th Habitat 500 Bike ride to raise money for our build and to promote affordable housing throughout Minnesota and in Fergus Falls in particular.

To support and be part of the Habitat mission and home building, you can help out financially by clicking on: [Donate to Fergus Falls Habitat & Stan's Ride](#)

### **Community Project with Sverdrup & Tingvold Lutheran Churches**

**"God's work - Our hands."**

**September 8, 2019**

***(See Kris Warhol for details)***

### **Finding Common Ground**

As one of the participants in Sandy Barnhouse's challenge to have coffee or lunch with someone with opposing political ideas but wherein you sought to find common ground, you are invited as a qualifier in her gathering at her house on or about August 24 for lunch/raffle of a painting. You still have time to have that conversation. Take a picture and send in your name to qualify for the raffle drawing to Sandy @ [artdome43@gmail.com](mailto:artdome43@gmail.com).





# A Place for Them

*Kelly Barrett wrote the article below for the Chippewa National Forest's Facebook page and shared it with us for the UCU newsletter. Kelly commented that she "couldn't help but be influenced by Sandy Barnhouse's party invite – the one where she encourages folks of differing opinions to sit down together and find common ground. My family has been doing that for years, sometimes more successfully than others."*

My father built a tiny prairie. Created beside the lake where he spent his boyhood summers, Dad invested years developing it. He started with the native prairie cordgrass that was there when he arrived and added many native grasses and forbs from prairie restoration outlets. Ahead of his time, what my Dad really did was build a refuge for pollinators. There being now a place for them, dozens of Monarch butterflies arrive there in the late summer and early fall, feeding on the nectar of blazing

star (*Liatris*) before their long migration south. It's a remarkable thing to see.

Not just Monarchs, one will also see other butterflies, bumble bees, and all kinds of pollinators on Dad's prairie. At Dad's prairie I took a picture of black swallowtails in the making. My mother was growing a big barrel of parsley on the deck. When it got overly full I "sculpted" it with scissors, and boy was Mom annoyed! But then one time when I went over to lend them a hand, the parsley had already been sculpted. When I looked more closely, I found the caterpillars...21 of them, to be exact. I was a bit worried we might be served a salad sometime with them mixed in, my mother by then not always catching smaller details, so I moved them to their native host plant in the prairie.

The plight of pollinators today is an increasingly well-known story. Monarch numbers are down more than 90% over the past 20 years. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently considering whether to list the monarch under the Endangered Species Act. In 2017 the rusty-patched bumble bee was listed as an endangered species, the first ever bumble bee in the U.S. to receive such a designation. This once historically abundant and widespread bee now occupies but a small fraction of its former range. A species status assessment predicts extinction in most areas of the bee's range within 5 years. Both the monarch and the rusty-patched bumblebee occur on the Chippewa National Forest.

It's a sad reality, but all pollinators are in trouble today, not just monarchs and bees. Major factors affecting pollinator populations include loss of forage plants and nesting habitat, use of pesticides,



spread of pathogens, and climate change. Pollinator declines reflect the health of our landscapes. Pollinators are a vital part of our food supply and our ecosystems. Over 80% of the world's flowering plants rely on pollinators. These insects are the foundation of functioning ecosystems.

Native plants play a critical role in supporting pollinators. As Heather Holm puts it in her book "Pollinators of Native Plants," pollinators have evolved with native plants over thousands of years, developing unique and interdependent relationships. Incorporating more native plants into home gardens, agricultural or large natural landscapes can have an extremely beneficial positive impact on pollinators and all wildlife. As my father's prairie shows, even small bits of quality habitat can contribute. Every individual can make a difference.

As people build an understanding of what is happening, more and more folks are choosing to get involved. In Minnesota the State will help homeowners turn their lawns into bee-friendly habitat by providing cost assistance to plant wild-flowers, clover and native grasses. It is an effort to slow the collapse of the state's bee populations, particularly the rusty-patched bumble bee.

On the Chippewa National Forest, we are working on behalf of the pollinators. We include native wildflowers in some of our plantings. We seek to maintain floral diversity in our open areas. Our large wet meadow restoration projects increase and maintain the diversity of native forbs through periodic application of prescribed fire. Our inventory crew conducts surveys to help us understand the bumblebee diversity on the Forest, particularly the presence of the endangered rusty-patched bumble bee.

Managing public lands in national forests and grasslands, the Forest Service is responsible for managing habitat to maintain populations of threatened, endangered, sensitive and other species of plants and animals on these lands. By managing for pollinators and their habitats, we help to ensure conservation of our Nation's biodiversity and create a healthier environment for both wildlife and people. Being not far from the prairie/forest border on the Chippewa National Forest and recognizing that our warming climate will likely shift that border, it is wise to position the landscape for the future. The opportunity to manage landscapes on behalf of the pollinators and other wildlife is part of the power of your public lands.

Dad's gone from his home by the lake now. His move to assisted living meant Dad had to leave the tiny prairie behind. My parents' place will be sold.

One of Dad's biggest worries is that the people who come next won't maintain the prairie, preferring instead a soft, mowed lawn leading down to the water. The reality is that most people would. And also, we all know that once you sell a place you no longer have control. But I told my Dad I would speak up for his prairie. I have some pictures. The last summer I spent caring for my mother I also tended her gardens and took some time with a camera on Dad's little prairie. I came to know it in a whole other way. I have some pictures, and I have some words.

The thing is, my father and I have not always seen eye to eye. Especially as it comes to politics we have been on the opposite ends of the spectrum. But one place we have met is on his prairie. I'm not sure what were all the ways in which Dad's prairie sustained him. Perhaps when Dad spent those childhood summers with his grandfather at the lake there was still prairie around. In

contrast, today less than 1% of the 18 million acres of prairie that once covered a third of Minnesota remains.

Dad's little bit of prairie appeals to something in me. Maybe it's the conservation ethic that many of us carry, regardless of who we are, where we live, or what we do for a living. It has to do with our connection with the natural world, that call from the wild. The beauty of that special place stirs something deep within me, resting in my core. I hope whoever comes next will see it, too.

More and more these days, my father's words are failing him. Time has a way of taking its toll and Dad has trouble finding them. Phone conversations can be a frustration for him, so every day I send Dad a post card, using mainly images from the prairie and some bit of news or an old story to share. In this time of fewer words my father and I no longer arm wrestle over politics. There are no raised voices. Rather, we meet at another place, using the language of love.





## Transition Your Home to Zero Waste

Terry Shaw shares with us more of what she learned at the workshop at TARE Market in Minneapolis called: **Transition Your Home to Zero Waste**. (See July newsletter for more)



### REDUCE WASTE SUGGESTIONS

- One great way to reduce trash is buy less stuff. Be satisfied with what you have, fix things that are broken. Share tools, appliances, and machinery with others or rent them when possible.
- Think about the life cycle of a product before you buy it – where did it come from? Where will it go when you are done with it?
- Take your reusable bags to all stores, not just the grocery store
- Bring mesh bags and reusable containers for produce and bulk items, even take out food
- Buy locally and in bulk
- Choose products with recycled packaging
- Buy products with recycled content
- Ditch single use coffee K-cups and single use tea bags. Use French press/reusable coffee filters and loose-leaf tea
- Use cloth napkins, handkerchiefs, and cloth diapers whenever possible
- Buy gently used instead of new
- Buy clothing made from natural fibers
- Plan meals and cook to reduce food waste
- Compost organics
- Instead of plastic, bring your own eating utensils, straws, reusable cups and bottles
- Make your own sauces, condiments and salad dressings
- Use matches instead of plastic lighters
- Line wastebaskets with newspapers or paper bags instead of plastic bags to prevent waste from sticking, dump it into your refuse container
- Get a bidet seat and reduce toilet paper use
- Get a toothbrush made from bamboo or other natural materials, not plastic
- Buy silk or bamboo dental floss in a cardboard or glass container
- Buy products like solid toothpaste and solid shampoo that are not packaged in plastic
- Use glass jars and containers for storage
- Use soap flakes, soap strips or soap nuts for laundry or find a place where you can refill your plastic container in bulk
- Buy non-toxic beauty products that are not packaged in plastic
- Grow your own food
- Reuse plastic containers and bags that you already have
- Make your own cleaning products
- Use rags and reusable mops to clean instead of disposable dusters and mop products
- Reduce use of packaged and frozen products
- Look on the internet or check your local natural foods store to find products that are not packaged in plastic

- Get off junk mail lists ([dmachoice.org](http://dmachoice.org) and [paperkarma.com](http://paperkarma.com) app)
- Recycle
- Pass along your ideas to others on how to reduce waste
- Don't beat yourself up because you can't do everything on this list
- Become active in your community or nationally to put pressure on businesses and companies to begin using reusable, biodegradable or recyclable bags and packaging

Note: To further reduce waste, Terry Shaw has a "Trash Audit Worksheet" available for hand-out. Instructions: Look through your household trash and use this worksheet to take note of which items are making up the bulk of your trash heading to the landfill. Write down the type of trash, quantity (however you prefer to quantify it), and then fill in the boxes to determine if there is a way you could reduce or eliminate this item from going in the landfill. Use the 6Rs of zero waste listed below to help you! Choose one item to tackle first, change your habits, and repeat!

- **Refuse:** Is this an item you could refuse next time (either all together or for a more sustainable option)?
- **Reduce:** Can you reduce the amount of this item that you buy/consume? Can you find an alternative with less packaging?
- **Reuse/Repair:** Can this item be reused or repaired? If so, and you don't need it, can you donate it? Where?
- **Rot:** Can this item go in your compost bin or organics recycling bin?
- **Recycle:** Is this item recyclable and where does it need to go to be recycled? Get familiar with your local recycling rules!
- **Revolt :** Consider writing to the company or store an item came from to request they use more sustainable packaging options!

For more information on conducting a trash audit, check out our post on [www.thetaremarket.com](http://www.thetaremarket.com) (search "trash audit"). *Submitted by Terry Shaw in consultation with Cedar Walters.*



**Janell Miersch, UCU Connector  
Reporting**

Save the Date: 9/20 Global Climate Strike

Millions of students across the world have shown us they're serious about climate action, organizing school strikes under the banner #FridaysForFuture. **This September 20th, school strikers are calling on everyone:** young people, parents, workers, and all concerned citizens to join massive climate strikes and a week of actions starting on **Friday, September 20.**

**Calling faith communities to mobilize for this event!** Click [here](#) to sign the pledge to join the climate strike, watch this short [video](#) to get inspired, and stay tuned for more details coming soon.

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### **MNIPL's Bob Blake featured in Rolling Stone Magazine**

This month, Rolling Stone featured Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light (MNIPL) staff member Bob Blake, who co-led a solar training at the Standing Rock reservation this past March. "Solar energy is spreading like wildfire through tribal nations right now... It's more than just a job, it's saving Mother Earth and protecting the sacred, and that is engrained in our DNA as Native peoples," he says. [Read article](#)

### **From Prison to Solar: Levi Running shares his story**

Last summer, Levi Running graduated from a solar training program at the Willow River Correctional facility, co-organized by MNIPL, Solar Bear, the Minnesota Department of Corrections, and the Midwest Renewable Energy Association. Levi has since launched a successful career in the solar industry. In an essay published in this month's Sierra Club Magazine, he writes, "Every day now, I'm excited to go to work—to do something that makes a difference and helps the planet." [Read the essay](#)

### **Nine faith communities joined the Summer Solstice Watershed Walk**

On the eve of the Summer Solstice, more than 30 people gathered for a beautiful celebration and "Water Walk" at the Laurentian Divide in Virginia, MN. The group represented at least nine churches and the broader community from Ely to Nashuak. After a group picnic, we hiked to the top of the Divide where water literally flows in three directions: to the Mississippi/St. Croix, to Lake Superior, and to Hudson Bay. Then in prayer to honor the water, we poured water from Lake Superior to disperse in all three directions.

Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light (MNIPL) thanks all who joined the walk and partners who co-organized the event! This includes Pilgrim Congregational, Peace United Church in Christ, and Gloria Dei, along with the Laurentian Conference of the ELCA.

### **[Prayer Circle at the Headwaters](#)**

*Headwaters of the Mississippi*

*September 21-22, 2019*

Join MNIPL at Lake Itasca again this September as part of a week of global climate action. We will be gathering in prayerful presence together at the Headwaters of the Mississippi to stand together as people of faith and spirit-led action. We will offer our prayers to the water in this critical time of water protection, solidarity with our Anishinaabe and Dakota siblings, and opposition to Line 3. More details to come. Contact [alina@mnipl.org](mailto:alina@mnipl.org) to get involved in the planning team for this event. (We could organize a carpool from UCU. Contact Janell Miersch [miers004@umn.edu](mailto:miers004@umn.edu) if this interests you. Shelley Becklund Hedtke and Janell went last year. There was great music, prayers, discussions, etc.)

## **EARTH DAY CELEBRATION 2020**

In 2020 Earth Day is on Wednesday April 22, which marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the global mobilization in defense of the environment. I will be working with the UCU Speakers Committee to celebrate on either the Sunday prior or subsequent to April 22. The Social and Environmental Justice Committee will be heavily involved, but all interested UCU members and friends are welcome to join the planning. We will meet face to face in September (date to be determined), then a few more times before the celebration. Please email me, Janell Miersch, [miers004@umn.edu](mailto:miers004@umn.edu) if you want to be involved. Stay tuned for more announcements! *Janell Miersch*

**The Unitarian Church of Underwood  
Celebrates 130 Years  
(1889-2019)**



**Who was here then? Who is here now?  
See if you can identify all these long-time members from 1973  
until today!!**

*We are Part of the Larger UU*



**MUUSJA**

MINNESOTA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE



## A Farewell from Rev. Ashley Horan



Dear ones,

Five years ago, I accepted the position as half-time Executive Director of the Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance at a time of great transition for both MUUSJA and my own family. My dear colleague Ralph Wyman had wrapped up his seven-year tenure as Director & Organizer of MUUSJA just six months before, and the talented Laura Smidzik (now Rev.!) had been faithfully serving as Interim ED. I was pregnant, expecting a baby in December, and leaving two years of parish ministry in Joliet, IL; my partner Karen had a new job as a chaplain in the Twin Cities; our older daughter was getting ready to start high school; and we all packed up and left Chicago for Minnesota that summer of 2014. I was glad for meaningful work that had a part time schedule and flexible hours, given all that lay before us... and, if I'm honest, I never expected to stay in the position more than a year or two.

But just three weeks after I started, Michael Brown was murdered in Ferguson, MO, and the world caught fire. The brilliant organizing that was to become the Movement for Black Lives began coalescing, and here in Minnesota, where there was already such a legacy of activism and organizing, the new Black Lives Matter - Minneapolis chapter came together, joining so many other powerful organizations already working for social, racial, and economic justice. In the coming few months, so many of us took to the highways, sat in at City Hall, protested at the Mall of America... including many who had never considered themselves activists before, but who couldn't sit on the sidelines any longer.

In the time since then, much has changed--and too much has stayed the same. The murders of Jamar Clark and Philando Castile; Standing Rock and other climate and human rights struggles; Pulse and Sandy Hook; the 2016 elections; denomination-wide reckonings within UUism about white supremacy and transphobia and so many other things; rising white nationalism and anti-semitism and Islamophobia; the escalating crisis over immigration and asylum seekers in concentration camps. It seems that the political moment we are in now is even more dire than it was five years ago. And at the same time, I also believe that we--as MUUSJA, and as Unitarian Universalists and the broader community of people of faith--have developed a musculature of



responsiveness, courage, and humility that we didn't have before.

**In other words: even though more and more injustice continues to be revealed, our movements for collective liberation are more and more ready to struggle, and to win.**

I am so deeply grateful to have been trusted with the leadership of this precious organization, and to have learned with and from all of you. I want to especially thank MUUSJA's truly extraordinary Board of Directors for the ways they have explored and grown in partnership with me over these years; my friend and colleague Pastor Danny Givens, with whom I've had the deep privilege of working as MUUSJA staff for the last two years; and all the lay and clergy leaders in our congregations who, day after day and year after year, embody the principles of our faith in the never-ceasing, mundane, heart-breaking, spirit-lifting work of justice-making. Thank you.

But while leaving now is bittersweet, there are good things ahead for me and for MUUSJA. Today, I'm happy to share that starting August 12, [I will be the new Organizing Strategy Director at the Unitarian Universalist Association](#). In that role, I will have the opportunity to work with the talented staff of the Organizing Strategy Table, and UUs across the country who are working for liberation in our own congregations and in partnership with mass movements for justice.

And as for MUUSJA: I am so proud of what we've built together over these past five years, and also fully confident that UU congregations and individuals in Minnesota will continue to build and deepen and show up in powerful ways long into the future. I am especially excited that Pastor Danny will be staying on as MUUSJA's Statewide Organizer, and that the incredibly talented Karen Wills will be stepping in as Acting Executive Director. Together, I know they will do great things, and will shepherd MUUSJA into its next iteration with grace and courage.

I will miss this work tremendously, but my family and I are excited to show up as supporters and volunteers for this powerful organization as it evolves to meet the inevitable challenges presented by a world struggling for survival. In fact, for my first act as a non-staff MUUSJA supporter, I am setting up my family's monthly Sustaining Donation, which is the primary way that MUUSJA gets funding for its day-to-day work.

**If you, too, are grateful for what we have done together in the past five years, and believe MUUSJA is a critical resource for unleashing courageous leadership and collective power to build a just and loving world, will you join me by [clicking here](#) and becoming a Sustaining Donor or making a one-time contribution?**

In closing, beloveds, I leave you with a blessing and an aspiration excerpted from Catholic [Bishop Ken Untener's tribute](#) to the liberation theologian and Central-American freedom-fighter Bishop Oscar Romero. These words were read at my ordination, and they remain a touchstone for me whenever I need to remember why we must stay in the struggle, together, even when it is so long and so hard:

*This is what we are about.  
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.*

*We water seeds already planted,  
knowing that they hold future promise.  
We lay foundations that will need further development.  
We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.  
We cannot do everything,  
and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.  
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.  
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's  
grace to enter and do the rest.  
We may never see the end results,  
but that is the difference between the master builder  
and the worker.  
We are workers, not master builders;  
ministers, not messiahs.  
We are prophets of a future not our own.*

Thank you, dear ones, for the gift of this time together, and for the spirit you bring to our shared work for justice. I will be forever grateful. Blessings,



*Ashley*

## **Join us for Ashley's Farewell Party!**

**August 12, 2019 - 6:30-8:30pm**

Unity Church - Unitarian

733 Portland Ave.

St. Paul, MN 55104

MUUSJA has been incredibly blessed to have Ashley leading the organization over the past five years. Under her leadership, MUUSJA has become a strong and joyful force that works every day to build a more just and loving world.

Running a small organization with a bold mission and vision is not an easy task. From writing grants to filing reports to planning programs and showing up at protests, Ashley played a key role in helping UUs find their place in an intersectional, multi-faith justice movement. We are so grateful for Ashley's courage, energy, and many talents that have helped MUUSJA thrive over the past five years.

Please join us in appreciating Ashley's service and wishing her luck on her next adventures! We will share delicious food and affirmations, and express our thanks while connecting to one another.

Please [RSVP here](#) by August 5 to let us know you're coming!

## Welcome Karen Wills, Our New Acting Executive Director

Dear Beloved Community,

This is a time of great transitions at MUUSJA. As we announced several months ago, our Executive Director, Rev. Ashley Horan, is concluding her tenure as MUUSJA's Executive Director as of this Sunday, July 21. We are deeply grateful for Ashley's five years of service, and we wish her all the best in her next steps. (Watch for a forthcoming announcement about Ashley's Farewell Party, scheduled for August 12!).

This a critical time for MUUSJA's work. The fight to undo systems of oppression and counter the rising tide of hate is unceasing. This week alone, we witnessed our neighbors and friends being ripped from their homes and families by ICE, and the decision by the United States Justice Department not to bring civil rights charges against the officer who killed Eric Garner.

In this context, the MUUSJA board has been dreaming and planning for what's next for the organization. We are excited that Pastor Danny Givens will continue to serve as MUUSJA's Statewide Organizer, focusing on building capacity and relationships among UUs across Minnesota. ***And, we are thrilled to***

***announce that MUUSJA will be entering its next chapter with Karen Wills leading the organization as the Acting Executive Director, continuing to move the organization's mission forward in these critical times.***



Karen brings a depth of experience in both Unitarian Universalism and justice-making. We are confident that Karen's many skills and talents will benefit MUUSJA and our mission to unleash courageous leadership and collective power to build a more just and loving world.

Please feel free to reach out to Karen at [director@muusja.org](mailto:director@muusja.org) or by phone at 612.927.2072.

Please welcome Karen to MUUSJA!

Taylor Putz and Sherri Knuth

MUUSJA Board Co-Chairs

## About Karen

Karen (she/her) is a "born and bred" UU whose mother was a California UU organizer; her fathers were gay rights activists. Karen has attended 13 different UU congregations in Boston, Pasadena, Chicago, Iowa City, Provincetown, Rochester, Minneapolis, and Bloomington (MN). She spent many years volunteering as a religious education teacher and youth advisor. For example, she taught "Our Whole Lives" in Rochester, "Neighboring Faiths," "Coming of Age" at First Universalist in Minneapolis, and "Beloved Conversations" at Minnesota Valley UU Fellowship in Bloomington.



As a hospital-based pediatric neuropsychologist (now in part-time independent practice), Karen has written successful grants, legislative briefs, and Op-Ed letters advocating for children with disabilities and special health care needs. Her coolest volunteer jobs before working with MUUSJA were teaching sign language to chimpanzees, coordinating Girl Scout jamborees, training volunteers to defeat the same-sex marriage ban, planning an intersectional rally at the state capitol, and organizing campaigns for several Minnesota state representatives. She lives in Bloomington with her husband, Steve, and loves to visit her daughter Emma in Los Angeles (especially midwinter!).

***Note: Ellen Eastby from UCU serves on the MUUSJA's Board of Directors and was a member of the search committee for the new hire.***

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### *Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community*



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## 019 Summer Newsletter is Ready

We hope you enjoy the UUJEC newsletter and find it useful in your justice work. Please feel free to print and share in your congregation. If you have suggestions or feedback about the newsletter, please let us know at [Newsletter@UUJEC.com](mailto:Newsletter@UUJEC.com). Thank you for your readership.

[Read it here](#)



[www.uua.org/bookstore](http://www.uua.org/bookstore) | [sign up for updates](#)

**UNITARIAN CHURCH OF UNDERWOOD  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MINUTES—June 19, 2019, BOARD MEETING**

Board members present: Allison Francis, Tim Lanz, John Minge, Ron Roller, Connie Stigen, and Kris Warhol

Board members absent: Darryl Booker, Bob Worner, Bonnie Shauer, and Shannon Smith

Others in attendance: John Shaw (only for part of the meeting.)

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 P.M. by Board President Kris Warhol.
2. Kris opened the meeting with a reading. The minutes for the May 2019 board meeting were approved without change. (Roller/Stigen)
3. John Shaw reported on the window project. He handed out the proposal that he received from Scott Peterson. John orally summarized his recommendations and also presented his recommendations in writing. John recommends that the project budget be kept at \$30,000, that we sign the contract that was received from Scott Peterson, and that we purchase builder's insurance. He also wants the Board to sign off on an indemnification which the Board decided to do by voting favorably on a motion to that effect. (Roller/Stigen). John indicated that the sooner that the contract with Peterson is signed, the sooner we will get into his work schedule. There was some discussion of the windows project and related matters. Allison said that she'd been approached by a congregant regarding the wisdom of doing an air quality test before the windows have been repaired/rebuilt. Ron said that someone had said to him that an air quality study/test was a waste of money. There was some discussion of these comments but no action contrary to prior board decisions was taken. The consensus seems to be that, without the study/test, we only have anecdotal evidence and can't make an informed decision whether or not to do anything to improve air quality in the church. There was also considerable discussion regarding whether to do five windows or all six. John Minge made the motion that the window contractor be asked how much would be



saved if we did only five windows now and how much more would be spent if we then did the sixth window later on (if no exit was built into the east end of the sanctuary). Tim seconded this motion. It was discussed and then passed by the Board. A motion to sign the contract with the window contractor was made and seconded. (Francis/Minge). The motion passed.

4. Stewardship Committee: Tim passed out a written Stewardship Committee report. There was no discussion of the report or action taken on it. It will be dealt with at a future board meeting.
5. Search Task Force regarding the administrative position to be filled: Connie reported that a job description has been developed and that steps are being taken or will soon be taken to get the position advertised and to move the hiring process forward.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m. The next board meeting will be on July 17, 2019, at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:  
John Minge, Secretary

N.B. The agenda was neither approved nor disapproved at the June 2019, board meeting. We jumped right into John Shaw's part of the meeting and forgot to go back after John was finished to consider the agenda for the board meeting. Not a big deal. I just wanted to mention this as some of you might wonder why it doesn't appear in the minutes.